

North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Thursday, June 12, 2025
1:00pm – 3:00pm
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District Conference Room
4232 Las Virgenes Rd, Calabasas, CA 91302
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Marcela Benavides-Aguilar, Los Angeles County (Agency)
William Johnson, Los Angeles County Waterworks (Agency)
Brian Baldauf, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (Agency)
*Craig Jones, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (Agency)
Jessica Forte, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (Agency), Chair
Madelyn Glickfeld, Resident (Community)
Andrew Nickerson, PSOMAS (Community)
Susan Nissman, Resident (Community)
Tevin Schmitt, Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation Ventura County (Community)
Jacy Shillan, Resident (Community)
*Kelly Fisher, Agoura Hills (Municipal)
*Melanis Stepanian, Calabasas (Municipal)
Bruce Hamamoto, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
*Ewelina Mutkowska, Malibu (Municipal)
Roxanne Hughes, Westlake Village (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Melina Sempill Watts, Melina Sempill Watts Inc. (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Absent:

Kelsey Reed, Hidden Hills (Municipal)
Aaron Ordower, LAC Supervisor District 3 (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees.

1) Welcome and Introduction

Jessica Forte, Chair of the NSMB Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order. Public Works staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established. Public Works staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial for meeting participants online.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 8, 2025

Chair Forte presented the minutes from May 8, 2025. Member Susan Nissman motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Madelyn Glickfeld. The WASC voted to approve the May 8, 2025 meeting minutes with 13 votes in favor, 1 in abstention, 0 opposed, and 1 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3) Committee Member and Program Updates

Vice-Chair Roxanne Hughes shared that the Westlake Village Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Compliance project is progressing, with the team on track to submit the Infrastructure Program (IP) Project Application on time and stay within the compliance schedule.

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Watershed Coordinator Melina Watts attended a Trails Fund event and mentioned that the National Park Service (NPS) is losing staff, and encouraged supporting NPS during this time.

Public Works staff provided an update, noting:

- A Funding Reduction Concurrence (FRC) form has been submitted for the NSMB Dry Weather Storm Drain Diversions study by the Project Applicant and posted on the [SCW Program website](#). The form was also emailed to the Committee Members for review on June 9, 2025.
- The Call for Projects deadline for consideration in Fiscal year 2026 – 2027 (FY26-27) Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) is July 31, 2025. The Projects Application Module is now live for Infrastructure Program (IP), Technical Resources Program (TRP), and Scientific Studies (SS) Program Applicants. Applicants can now start populating the Application. A location of resources related to the Application can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).
- The Regional Program Annual Report covering July 2024 - June 2025 is due on August 15, 2025 for IP projects and SS approved in FY20 through FY25 SIPs. Project and Study Developers should submit Reports regardless of receiving funds, having expenditures or activities, or having executed the Funds Transfer Agreement.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting occurred on June 11 at 1:00pm where the ROC reviewed four of the nine SIPs. The subsequent ROC meeting occurred on July 9 at 1:00pm where the ROC reviewed the last five of the nine SIPs, including the NSMB SIP.
- A new Metrics & Measures section is now available in the Municipal Program Reporting Module, which will collect data for performance metrics specific to Municipal Program Project activities to align with and inform the Watershed Planning efforts and SCW Program-wide progress assessments. The section should be filled out by June 16. Public Works staff hosted a virtual workshop on May 15 and materials can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).
- Applications are no longer being accepted for the Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program; however, a list of approved proposals for Round 1 can be found on the [Water Foundation's Website](#).
- The Quarter 4 (Q4) 2025 Funding Report has been posted to the [SCW Program website](#) under the Resources tab. In support of Public Works, the Regional Coordination team prepares quarterly funding reports that include a high-level overview of recent funding policy highlights and a funding matrix that shares currently active and upcoming funding opportunities that may be relevant to SCW Program projects. Public Works staff and the Regional Coordination team are actively tracking activity to better understand impacts to future funding.

Public Works' Watershed Planning staff provided an update, noting:

- A new standalone Watershed Planning webpage on the [SCW Program website](#) is now live. It will house all prior and upcoming resources related to the Watershed Planning effort.
- The Community Strengths & Needs Assessment (CSNA) Survey has been steadily gaining momentum in the last several months due to engagement efforts led by the Watershed Coordinators. Since the CSNA's launch, 343 new survey responses have been collected, with 34 collected for the NSMB Watershed Area. To aid in spreading awareness of the survey, a promotional toolkit has been developed and is available on the new Watershed Planning webpage, alongside the CSNA Survey and Dashboard. The toolkit is available to anyone, such as municipalities, non-governmental organizations or community-based organizations, and others interested in utilizing and promoting the CSNA.
- As part of Adaptive Management, the Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) Task Force and Blue Ribbon Panel is currently developing a standard NBS definition and criteria to fill current definitional gaps. Once available, these updates will be incorporated in future Watershed Planning efforts.
- Draft Initial Watershed Plans will be available for a 30-day public review period in Fall 2025. After the conclusion of the public review period, Watershed Planning staff will present the Initial

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Watershed Plans to each WASC and the ROC. In early 2026, the Initial Watershed Plans will be published.

Member Nissman confirmed with Public Works staff that definitions and criteria regarding NBS are being updated by a Los Angeles County Water Plan task force. Public Works staff noted that progress is ongoing and that the Initial Watershed Plans will not include definitive language around NBS.

Member Glickfeld raised concerns about the NSMB Dry Weather Storm Drain Diversion SS's FRC form, noting the potential of distributing tasks to a subconsultant who may have more expertise with grant applications. Chair Forte confirmed with m6 Consulting that they will be handling all the work themselves.

Chair Forte confirmed with Public Works staff that the SIPs will be presented to the Board of Supervisors (Board) around late October and will notify the NSMB WASC once the date is confirmed. Transfer Agreements typically follow about a month after Board approval and depend on how quickly the Project Developer proceeds.

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) emphasized that any private entity entering the Funds Transfer Agreement with the County must fully understand responsibilities under the Transfer Agreement. A blank version of the Transfer Agreement is available online for review, and the entity must have full awareness of its terms.

Member Ewelina Mutkowska asked about the timeline for project concepts receiving Technical Assistance Teams. Public Works staff explained that Technical Assistance Team funding follows a separate process from Fund Transfer Agreements. Proposals must be solicited, consultants contracted, and a notice to proceed issued before the feasibility study begins. Typically, this process takes 8 to 12 months after Board adoption, with work expected to begin the following year.

4) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Watts provided an update on activities within the NSMB Watershed Area, and presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Increased interest from California State Parks was highlighted, with multiple restoration projects including a 3-mile creek restoration and wildfire recovery efforts. Funding is needed for seasonal staff and restoration activities. While some aspects may not fully align with SCW Program guidelines, strong alignment with other funding opportunities in Sacramento is evident. A list of approximately 40 potential applications across seven entities has been compiled.

Watershed Coordinator Watts noted that Member Bruce Hamamoto is helping evaluate a potential project for its eligibility and appropriateness as a SCW Program regional project. Watershed Coordinator Watts commented that the project has promising Water Quality and stormwater management elements. If the project elements make it eligible, Watershed Coordinator Watts will provide support to advance the Application; otherwise, alternative funding sources will be sought.

Funding for the "Living Lively in the Watershed" initiative was addressed. The initiative is currently on hold due to competing priorities; Watershed Coordinator Watts welcomed reminders to prioritize this initiative in the future.

Outreach efforts include participation in local watershed events, assembling a group to develop a "State of the Watershed" film, and planning a celebration event targeted for May 2026.

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Watershed Coordinator Watts noted exploring TRP Application opportunities with partners such as the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, particularly for projects involving parking lot removals and SS applications that previously lacked funding.

Antos added that the [SCW Program website's](#) Resources page now includes a regularly updated Funding Report containing federal and state-level grant opportunities. This resource supports both program-related and external projects. Vice-Chair Hughes commented that the Funding Report is a valuable tool for locating and tracking grant opportunities.

5) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Chair Forte disclosed a meeting with Watershed Coordinator Watts, Member Melanis Stepanian, Vice-Chair Hughes, and Member Jacy Shillan to discuss a potential "State of the Watershed" film opportunity. Vice-Chair Hughes confirmed being involved in the discussion and disclosed working with Member Stepanian on the film, which is progressing well. The group members are tentatively targeting November for the "State of the Watershed" event, noting that November is just before the mayoral changeover and other cities' "State of the City" addresses. Chair Forte requested input on the timing of the event, and Watershed Coordinator Watts noted that the project is funded by a grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Fund.

6) Public Comment Period

A public member, a landscape architect student, made an introduction and commented that they will be attending the WASC meetings regularly per Watershed Coordinator Watts' invitation.

7) Discussion Items

a. Watershed Coordinator Capabilities and Qualifications Interviews and Selection

The Watershed Coordinator Capabilities and Qualifications Interviews involved a formal interview process with seven questions. Slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Craig Jones asked whether the Watershed Coordinator's budget would remain static over five year contract, and Public Works staff explained efforts are being made to have contractual language that allows for the budget to be potentially increased. Antos clarified that any increase to the Watershed Coordinator's budget would require both contractual allowance and allocation through the SIP process.

Vice-Chair Hughes raised concerns about differences between full-time and part-time Watershed Coordinators, noting the workload demands a full-time commitment. Antos explained that Watershed Coordinator demands depend on the size and population of the Watershed Area. Member Glickfeld added that the Watershed Coordinator requirements and scope should be reviewed and considered. Public Works staff acknowledged that gauging the level of effort is challenging and noted that these concerns are being considered for the next contract.

Member Nissman emphasized the importance of having a capable, innovative Watershed Coordinator who understands the complexity of the environment and can develop practical solutions in a constrained process. Antos noted that the Request for Statements of Qualification (RFSQ) process includes an evaluation of candidates' skills and ability to perform. Chair Forte stressed the importance of fairness in the selection process and encouraged giving Candidate Melina Watts a full opportunity for the interview process.

Candidate Watts highlighted extensive experience relevant to the Watershed Coordinator role in the NSMB Watershed Area, citing outreach efforts with various organizations and efforts in leveraging funds.

Several Committee Members shared opinions regarding Candidate Watts' capabilities and experience working in this Watershed Area and expressed support for Candidate Watts' continuation in the Watershed Coordinator role.

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8) Public Comment Period

The Committee decided to discuss this Agenda Item before Agenda Item 7.b.

There were no public comments.

9) Voting Item

a) Selection of the Watershed Coordinator for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

The Committee decided to discuss this Agenda Item before Agenda Item 7.b.

Member Jones suggested considerations of workload should be further examined. Public Works staff acknowledged the feedback and noted that the upcoming ROC Biennial Report might be a good opportunity to address the topic.

Member Glickfeld motioned to appoint Melina Watts as the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Coordinator, seconded by Member Nissman. The WASC voted to appoint Melina Watts as the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Coordinator minutes with 15 votes in favor, 0 in abstention, 0 opposed, and 0 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

7) Discussion Items

b. Unincorporated County Project Updates

Alberto Grajeda (Los Angeles County Public Works, Project Developer) provided an update on the Liberty Canyon Road Green Improvement Project and the Mulholland Highway Green Improvement Project. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Vice-Chair Hughes confirmed with Grajeda that both projects include the addition of trees and bioswales. Member Stepanian asked whether traffic mitigation would be considered, and Grajeda responded that this would be evaluated during the design phase, particularly when the environmental documentation is developed.

Member Glickfeld asked if there is public awareness and understanding of the projects. Grajeda explained that back in 2020, a few letters of support were received, and public meeting attendees at the time were supportive. A community meeting for each project is being planned, tentatively set for late July or August, to be held virtually and include a project walkthrough.

Member Glickfeld emphasized the importance of re-engaging with the Mulholland community, noting that five years have passed and emphasized the need to demonstrate visible progress. Grajeda agreed and confirmed that outreach is a priority.

Member Nissman mentioned that this is an opportunity to rebuild positive public sentiment and Watershed Coordinator Watts added that the winding nature of the area could be a visual focal point. Member Forte concluded the discussion by stating that any additional input would be addressed after the meeting.

The Committee decided to defer Agenda Item 7.c. to the next meeting.

10) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting will be on July 10, 2025, held in person and online via WebEx. See the [SCW Program website](#) for meeting details. Items on the next agenda may include:

- a. FY24-25 Regional Program Mid-Year Report Summary
- b. Water Quality Talk by Heal the Bay
- c. Watershed Coordinator Presentation: Safe, Clean Water Program 12 Projects, 9 Watersheds

Chair Forte commented that the SS Developer that submitted the FRC, m6 Consulting, plan to carry out the full scope of work themselves, provided the contracts are finalized and allow for it.

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11) Adjournment

Chair Forte thanked the WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

NSMB WASC - June 12, 2025							
		Quorum Present				Voting Items	
Member Type	Organization	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Approve May 8, 2025 NSMB WASC Meeting Minutes	Appoint Melina Watts as the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Coordinator
Agency	LACFCD	Marcela Benavides-Aguilar	x	Daniel Bradbury		y	y
Agency	LAC Waterworks District	William Johnson	x			y	y
Agency	MRCA	Brian Baldauf	x	Rebecca Correa		y	y
Agency	LVMWD	David Pedersen		Craig Jones	x	y	y
Agency	LVMWD	Jessica Forte	x	Jeremy Wolf		y	y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Madelyn Glickfeld	x	Richard Ambrose		y	y
Community Stakeholder	PSOMAS	Andrew Nickerson	x			absent at vote	y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Susan Nissman	x			y	y
Community Stakeholder	Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation Ventura County	Tevin Schmitt	x	Natalia Cuellar		y	y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Jacy Shillan	x			y	y
Municipal Members	Agoura Hills	Charmaine Yambao		Kelly Fisher	x	y	y
Municipal Members	Calabasas	Curtis Castle		Melanis Stepanian	x	a	y
Municipal Members	Hidden Hills	Kelsey Reed		Mayra Martinez			
Municipal Members	LAC Supervisor District 3	Aaron Ordower		Rachel Fox			
Municipal Members	LAC Public Works	Bruce Hamamoto	x			y	y
Municipal Members	Malibu	Kiernan Brtalik		Ewelina Mutkowska	x	y	y
Municipal Members	Westlake Village	Roxanne Hughes	x	Josephine Wilson		y	y
Watershed Coordinator	Melina S. Watts Consulting, LLC	Melina Watts	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yay (Y)	13	15
Total Voting Members Present		15			Nay (N)	0	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1	0
Community Stakeholder		5			Total	14	15
Municipal Members		5				Approved	Approved

Other Attendees

Alberto Grajeda
 Alex Messina
 Alexander Iglesias R
 Alonzo
 Alonzo CWH
 Craig Doberstein
 Daniel A.
 Daniel Bradbury
 Eric Bonilla
 Gabriel Z LADPW
 Hannah Daum
 Humon Moeen
 Jessica
 Larry Tran
 Lisa (Jin) Kim - Los A
 Luis Perez Watershe
 NSMB WASC 1
 NSMB WASC 2
 Rich Ambrose

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization		Signature
Marcela Benavides-Aguilar	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Primary	<i>MB</i>
Daniel Bradbury	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Alternate	
Brian Baldauf	Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority	Primary	<i>B.A. Baldauf</i>
Rebecca Correa	Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority	Alternate	
William Johnson	LA County Waterworks District	Primary	<i>W. Johnson</i>
David Pedersen	Las Virgenes Municipal Water District	Primary	
Craig Jones	Las Virgenes Municipal Water District	Alternate	<i>C. Jones</i>
Jessica Forte	Las Virgenes Municipal Water District	Primary	
Jeremy Wolf	Las Virgenes Municipal Water District	Alternate	
Madelyn Glickfeld	Resident	Primary	
Richard Ambrose	Resident	Alternate	
Andrew Nickerson	Community Stakeholder	Primary	<i>A. Nickerson</i>

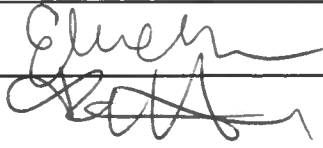
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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization		Signature
Ion Cretu	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Susan Nissman	Resident	Primary	<i>Susan Nissman</i>
Tevin Schmitt	Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation Ventura County	Primary	<i>Tevin Schmitt</i>
Natalia Cuellar	Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation Ventura County	Alternate	
Jacy Shillan	Resident	Primary	<i>Jacy Shillan</i>
Charmaine Yambao	Agoura Hills	Primary	
Kelly Fisher	Agoura Hills	Alternate	<i>Kelly Fisher</i>
Curtis Castle	Calabasas	Primary	
Melanis Stepanian	Calabasas	Alternate	<i>Melanis Stepanian</i>
Kelsey Reed	Hidden Hills	Primary	
Mayra Martinez	Hidden Hills	Alternate	
Aaron Ordower	LAC Supervisor District 3	Primary	

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization		Signature
Rachel Fox	LAC Supervisor District 3	Alternate	
Bruce Hamamoto	Los Angeles County	Primary	
	Los Angeles County	Alternate	
Kiernan Brtalik	Malibu	Primary	
Ewelina Mutkowska	Malibu	Alternate	
Roxanne Hughes	Westlake Village	Primary	
Josephine Wilson	Westlake Village	Alternate	
Melina Watts	Watershed Coordinator	Primary	